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AMEMBASSY NAIROBI IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

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LONDON FOR MCKINLEY

E.O. 12356: OADR

TAGS: PREL, PREF, EAID, PINR, RW, UG

SUBJECT: RPF MEETS WITH INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

ON RELIEF EFFORTS IN NORTHERN RWANDA

REF: STATE 125953 (NOTAL)

1. CONFIDENTIAL - ENTIRE TEXT.

- 2. SUMMARY: THE RWANDAN PATRIOTIC FRONT (RPF) CALLED A MEETING WITH THE NON-GOVERNMENTAL AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS ON MAY 13 TO DISCUSS RELIEF EFFORTS IN RPF HELD TERRITORY IN NORTHERN RWANDA. REPRESENTATIVES FROM OVER TWENTY RELIEF ORGANIZATIONS ATTENDED WITH MOST OFFERING CONCRETE PLEDGES OF SUPPORT (TO BE REPORTED BY SEPTEL). THE RELIEF AGENCIES ARE UP AND RUNNING, BUT THE RPF IS ONLY BEGINNING TO ORGANIZE ITS HUMANITARIAN WING TO COORDINATE WITH THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS. IT HAS A LOT TO LEARN. END SUMMARY.
- 3. THE RPF INVITED INTERESTED NGO'S AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, INCLUDING THE WORLD FOOD PROGRAM AND UNHCR, TO ITS HEADQUARTERS IN MULINDI ON MAY 13 TO COORDINATE RELIEF EFFORTS IN NORTHERN RWANDA. OFDA'S ASSESSMENT TEAM, KATE FARNSWORTH AND LARRY MESERVE, AND EMBASSY POLITICAL OFFICER JANET BEIK ATTENDED THE MEETING, ALONG WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF 22 INTERNATIONAL AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS, INCLUDING ICRC, CARE, SAVE THE CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 KAMPAL 03960 01 OF 03 171342Z CHILDREN AND VARIOUS MSF AND OTHER MEDICAL TEAMS. THE MEETING LASTED OVER SIX HOURS AND DEMONSTRATED THE URGENT NEED FOR MORE AND BETTER INFORMATION ON THE CONDITIONS IN RPF-HELD TERRITORY.

- 4. MULINDI WAS DESERTED EXCEPT FOR A HANDFUL OF UNAMIR SOLDIERS STATIONED THERE, AND A FEW, VERY YOUNG RPF SOLDIERS CARRYING AK-47 RIFLES. THE TEA PLANTATION IS OVERGROWN, AS ARE ALL OF THE TERRACED HILLSIDE FARMS VISIBLE DURING THE SHORT DRIVE FROM THE BORDER CHECKPOINT AT KATUNA. THE U.S. TEAM OBSERVED NO CIVILIANS ON OR OFF THE ROAD, AND ONLY ONE SMALL HERD OF CATTLE WITH TWO HERDSMEN WEARING ARMY FATIGUES.
- 5. THE TOP RPF LEADERS, INCLUDING KAGAME AND KANYARENGWE, WERE REPORTED TO BE IN BIUMBA. PATRICK MAZIMHAKA, RPF VICE CHAIRMAN, WAS SLATED TO CHAIR THE MEETING, BUT WAS SAID TO BE AWAY FROM MULINDI ON URGENT BUSINESS. PASCAL BIZIMUNGU JOINED THE MEETING BRIEFLY, INTRODUCED AS THE "INTERIOR MINISTER." GASPARD NYIRINKINDI TOOK THE CHAIR, ALONG WITH CHRISTINE NYINAWUMWAMI (THE RPF POINT PERSON FOR RELIEF AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE). HE SPOKE NO

ENGLISH, SHE NO FRENCH, SO ALMOST IMMEDIATELY THE MEETING REQUIRED FULL TRANSLATION INTO BOTH LANGUAGES.

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6. THE RPF BRIEFING ON THE DISPLACED PERSONS CAMPS
IN ITS NORTHERN ZONE CONSISTED OF A LIST OF CAMP
NAMES WITH CURRENT POPULATION NUMBERS AND A SECOND
LIST OF WHAT HAD BEEN PROVIDED SO FAR (PRIMARILY ICRC
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PAGE 04 KAMPAL 03960 01 OF 03 171342Z AND WFP FOOD SHIPMENTS). THE RPF OFFERED NO ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON THE CONDITIONS IN EACH CAMP, WHICH CAMPS HAVE THE MOST ACUTE NEEDS, OR EVEN WHERE THEY ARE LOCATED. THE CHAIRMAN THEN ASKED FOR PLEDGES FROM THE NGO'S PRESENT, WHAT THEY INTENDED TO DO, WHERE, AND HOW SOON. NGO REPS WANTED FAR MORE INFORMATION FROM THE RPF; THE RPF RESPONSE WAS TO INSIST THAT IT NEEDED CONCRETE COMMITMENTS FROM THE ORGANIZATIONS PRESENT AND THAT "MANAGEMENT ISSUES" COULD BE RESOLVED LATER. WHEN IT BECAME CLEAR THAT THEIR QUESTIONS WERE NOT GOING TO BE ANSWERED DURING THE MEETING, THE NGO'S OUTLINED WHAT THEY ARE PREPARED TO OFFER AT THIS TIME. (OFDA TEAM WILL BE SENDING THE SPECIFIC LISTS OF THE CAMPS AND RELIEF PLEDGES BY SEPTEL).

7. THE RPF'S PROPOSED GUIDELINES FOR NGO OPERATIONS IN RPF TERRITORY RAISED A STORM OF PROTEST OVER SUCH ISSUES AS RPF CLEARANCES OF LOCAL STAFF BEFORE THEY

COULD BE HIRED BY THE NGO'S. THE NGO'S WANTED TO KNOW THE RPF POLICY ON SALARIES FOR LOCAL STAFF

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(THERE IS NONE YET), BUT MOST NGO'S OBJECTED TO HAVING THEIR EMPLOYEES SCREENED BEFORE BEING HIRED. THE U.N. ORGANIZATIONS STATED FRANKLY THEY WOULD NOT AGREE TO SUCH A POLICY. THE QUESTION OF ACCESS TO THE CAMPS WAS RAISED BY A NUMBER OF ORGANIZATIONS,

MOST POINTEDLY BY A FRENCH DOCTOR WHO SAID MEDECINS DU MONDE HAD HAD MEDICAL TEAMS IN RWANDA FOR TWO WEEKS BUT HAD NOT YET BEEN PERMITTED BY THE RPF TO GO OUT INTO THE CAMPS TO DO THEIR WORK.

- 8. THE INTERNATIONAL GROUP REPEATEDLY ASKED FOR INFORMATION ON THE MANAGEMENT OF THE CAMPS AND THE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES FORMING WITHIN THE CAMPS. THE RPF IS IN THE PROCESS OF ORGANIZING THE CAMPS AROUND CADRES FROM THE RPF, WITH LOCAL CELLS AND COMMITTEES. THE NGO'S, MANY OF WHOM ARE VETERANS OF REGIONAL CRISES SUCH AS SOMALIA AND LIBERIA, MADE IT CLEAR TO THE RPF REPRESENTATIVES THAT IN ORDER TO WORK EFFECTIVELY, THEY NEEDED A STEADY FLOW OF INFORMATION AND THE ABILITY TO ASSESS THE NEEDS OF THE CAMPS AND TO MONITOR THE DISTRIBUTION OF THEIR RELIEF SHIPMENTS.
 - 9. POLOFF ASKED RPF REP SETH SENDASHONGA AFTER THE CONFIDENTIAL

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 MEETING ABOUT THE RPF'S PLANS FOR THE ZONES UNDER ITS
 CONTROL. HE ADMITTED THE RPF IS ONLY BEGINNING TO
 SET UP CIVIL ADMINISTRATION IN ITS TERRITORY. THE
 RPF IS INSTALLING KEY CENTRAL LEADERS IN EACH OF ITS
 SIX DISTRICTS. THE RPF DID NOT WANT TO CALL THESE
 ADMINISTRATORS "PREFETS", HE SAID, BUT THAT IS THE
 IDEA FOR THE POSITION -- A CENTRAL FIGURE TO
 COORDINATE ALL LOCAL GOVERNMENT ARRANGEMENTS. AT
 POLOFF'S QUESTION, HE SAID THESE WERE ALL CIVILIANS
 AND NOT/NOT MILITARY OFFICERS.
- 10. ON A MORE POLITICAL NOTE, SENDASHONGA REPEATED THE RPF PARTY LINE THAT IT WILL ENGAGE IN TALKS ONLY WITH ITS MILITARY OPPONENTS AND NOT WITH THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT. HE SAID THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY'S INSISTENCE ON A CEASEFIRE MISSED THE POINT; THE RPF DOES NOT WISH TO RECOGNIZE THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT BY SIGNING A CEASEFIRE AGREEMENT. POLOFF SAID THAT WE ARE NOT TRYING TO TRICK THE RPF INTO RECOGNITION OF THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT, BUT THAT A CEASEFIRE IS A BASIC FIRST STEP, SIMPLY TO STOP THE KILLING. SENDASHONGA SAID THE RPF WAS NOT/NOT CURRENTLY HOLDING DISCUSSIONS WITH THE RWANDAN MILITARY LEADERS ON A CEASEFIRE. HE DESCRIBED THE RPF AS "IN AND AROUND" KIGALI BUT WOULD NOT SAY WHEN THEY EXPECTED

TO TAKE THE CAPITAL. HE BELIEVED THE FORMATION OF A NEUTRAL ZONE AROUND THE AIRPORT FOR HUMANITARIAN PURPOSES WAS A GOOD IDEA AND THE RPF HAD SUPPORTED THE PROPOSAL; IT WAS, HE SAID, THE GOVERNMENT TROOPS WHO HAD FIRED ON THE AIRPORT FIRST, REQUIRING THE RPF TO RETALIATE.

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- 11. SENDASHONGA SAID THE RPF ADAMANTLY MAINTAINS THAT THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE MASSACRES SHOULD BE BROUGHT TO JUSTICE. HE FELT THERE SHOULD BE INTERNATIONAL PARTICIPATION IN ANY FUTURE TRIBUNAL FOR THESE WAR CRIMINALS. IN THE PAST, NO ONE WAS EVER PROSECUTED FOR RWANDA'S MASSACRES, HE SAID; THIS TIME, THE CRIMINALS MUST KNOW THEY WILL BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE FOR THEIR THEIR CRIMES.
- 12. COMMENT. THE RPF IS UTTERLY UNPREPARED TO ORGANIZE RELIEF EFFORTS ON THE SCALE NEEDED IN NORTHERN RWANDA. THE HUMANITARIAN WING OF THE MOVEMENT IS QUITE NEW, VERY LIMITED IN PERSONNEL AND TOTALLY INEXPERIENCED. SEVERAL OF THE U.N. AND NGO OFFICIALS PRESENT AT THE MEETING WERE HOPEFUL, HOWEVER, THAT THEY CAN WORK WITH THE RPF AND GUIDE THEM IN STANDARD PROCEDURES FOR RELIEF WORK, AS THE ICRC HAS ALREADY BEGUN TO DO. THE U.N. HAS PRESENTED THE RPF WITH BASIC POINTS FOR AGREEMENT ON CONDUCTING RELIEF WORK IN THE RPF ZONE; THE RPF HAD NOT YET SIGNED THIS AGREEMENT. THE SERIOUS COMMITMENTS

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EXPRESSED BY THE NGO'S AT THIS FIRST MEETING, IN BOTH PERSONNEL AND ASSISTANCE, SHOULD HELP SPEED UP THE RPF'S INEVITABLE LEARNING CURVE ON HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE. END COMMENT.

13. BIO NOTE. EMBASSY FSN ATTENDED HIGH SCHOOL IN

KAMPALA WITH CHRISTINE MWAMI. UNIVERSALLY			NYINAWU				UNCLASSIFIE		
		CHRISTINE,	SHE	IS	A	RWANDAN	(TUTSI)		
	_								

14. THIS CABLE WAS DRAFTED AFTER THE OFDA TEAM DEPARTED KAMPALA.

15. MINIMIZE CONSIDERED. CARSON

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